

Minutes of the Ashland Budget Committee Meeting  
Held on December 16, 2004  
In the  
Ashland Elementary School Library

Committee Members Present: D. Ruell, Chair, N. Bavis, J. Cole, S. Coleman, G. Dion, R. Fisk (7:08 p.m.), K.B. Hughes, K.L. Hughes, A.M. Reeve, D. Sullivan and Selectwoman C. Goss

Committee Members Excused: D. Golden, J.Goss, J. Hughes, H. Knowlton

Others Present: Rick Alpers, Pat Tucker, Lee Nichols, Jim Gleick, Joe Chivell, Mark Ober, Thomas Stewart

7:00 p.m. the meeting was called to order.

Ms. Tucker presented the budget for the general town functions. Notable items include:

Budget Line	Explanation
01-4140-10-610	The increase in the Town Clerk's expense was due to increased expense for software support.
01-4140-10-611	Ms. Tucker explained that the increase of \$900 was because of an additional book at the bindery.
01-4150-10-130	This line reflects a 7% increase for the treasurer's expense because the Treasurer's position has expanded to managing 11 accounts, up from the 3 previously managed.
01-4150-10-231	Consulting / accounting fees were increased by approximately 27,000 to reflect the expense of a bookkeeper. The bookkeeper has been working additional hours initially to complete reconciliations for past periods. This spring, the bookkeeper should be working fewer than 16 hours per week. The bookkeeper is currently paid \$30 / hour but will be increasing to \$33 / hour in September. Selectwoman Goss, responding to questions about the hourly rate, said the position had initially been advertised at a lower rate but had they had not received any inquiries from trained bookkeepers. The 10% raise was questioned by members of the committee.
01-4150-20-110	Increases in town office salaries. Town employees will receive a 3.81% increase. The budget also reflects the addition of a part time office clerk to help with answering the 'phones. A member of the committee asked if the Town Planner position had been made permanent or remained an interim position. Mr. Alpers responded to questions from the Committee on whether he had experience with planning and zoning board matters and what his expectations were when he was hired.
01-4150-20-217	Health Insurance: It was explained that the town continued to pay the full premium for employee health insurance. The new policy required no deductible and was cheaper than the policy it replaced.
01-4150-20-342	Computer expenses. The budget included \$5,000 for a planned server upgrade and \$610.55 per year for virus protection. A suggestion was made to reduce this amount by \$2,000.
01-4150-20-491	The \$8,500 budgeted for telephones was discussed and Mr. Alpers said he thought he could switch telephone vendors and reduce this amount. No

	estimated saving amount was recorded.
01-4150-40-130	Tax collector salary increased by 5%.
01-4150-40-331	Tax collector training increased by \$200.
01-4150-40-610	In response to questions on the increase to this line item, it was explained that expenses for tax collector general supplies were largely biennial.

Mr. Gleick presented the budget for the Parks and Recreation Department. Notable items include:

Budget Line	Explanation
01-4520-50-740	Beach Equipment: this line reflected an amount to replace the popcorn machine, to add a changing table and grab rail to the beach bathroom to meet code and to replace the swim line markers. Committee members discussed the possibility of changes to the beach ramp to meet accessibility requirements.
01-4520-50-883	Beach swim program: the budget includes \$1,000 stipend for a swimming instructor. The Selectmen added \$100 for flotation devices.
01-4520-70-120	Campground salary: Historically, the town has had a monitor to keep tabs on the campground. The need for someone to clean the bathrooms was discussed. Mr. Gleick said that regularly scheduled cleanings would allow the campground to become accredited. Currently the beach staff cleans the bathrooms in the mornings and Mr. Gleick maintains them during the day.
01-4520-70-410	Campground electric: this amount was guaranteed by the town but billed back to the campers.
01-4520-70-411	Campground oil: Mr. Gleick explained that the budget was increased to account for oil needed for the washer and showers. This expense was expected to be offset by increased campground expenses and funds from the coin operated machines.
01-4520-70-620	Campground general expense. The selectmen had eliminated this line entirely.
01-4521-30-641	Playground ground maintenance: the selectmen had reduced the proposed budget by 50%. Mr. Gleick explained that previous years' budgets had included purchasing wood chips and this year they expected to just "fluff up" the existing chips. The line item also included fertilizing and liming.
01-4521-30-999	Tennis & basketball court maintenance: Mr. Gleick did not dispute the selectmen's reduction by \$500.
01-4521-40-491	Clubhouse Telephone: This line included telephone, high speed internet access and printing cartridges. The selectmen cut this line to \$600 and Mr. Gleick requested \$1,000.
01-4521-40-640	Clubhouse maintenance: This line included heat tape & insulation for the water pipes, spray foam for foundation cracks, hand rails and refinishing the stove. In 2005 would like to complete insulating the ceiling and under the main floor.
01-4522-10-830	Special programs: Mr. Gleick increased this line by \$1,000 to cover

	admission fees to certain activities. In previous years, P&R paid half the expense for certain outside admissions.
01-4522-30-620	Playground supplies: The selectmen reduced this line from \$1,500 to \$500. Mr. Gleick requested a total of \$800 for replacement physical education kits, noting that no new large equipment purchases were scheduled for 2005.
01-4522-30-621	Snacks for resale: Mr. Gleick increased this line to \$1200, feeling that more snacks could be resold and this cost recovered. The selectmen reduced it to \$1,000.
01-4522-30-831	Playground programs bus: This line had to be increased to allow for a wheelchair bus.

The Committee took up scheduling its next meetings. Ms. Coleman moved to hold the public hearing January 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in the Ashland Elementary School cafeteria. K.B. Hughes seconded. The motion passed.

K.B. Hughes moved to hold a work session on December 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm in the Ashland Fire Department. Ms. Coleman seconded. The motion passed.

K.L. Hughes moved to hold a work session on January 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm in the Ashland Elementary School Library. Ms. Fisk seconded. The motion passed.

Mr. Ober presented the budget for the Highway Department and Transfer Station. Notable items include:

Budget Line	Explanation
10-4311-10-210	Health Insurance: The cost increased by 18.3% to \$469.79 for an individual policy, \$939.58 for a couple and \$1,268.43 for a family.
10-4312-10-730	Street Improvements: The requested \$138,400 includes \$56,000 for Thompson Street, \$55,600 for North Ashland Road and the remainder priced on a per ton basis for Hicks Hill Road, Libby Lane and Mt. View Drive. Mr. Ober responded to questions on whether the new road would be damaged by construction traffic up and down and whether the improvements to Thompson Road were coordinated with water and sewer.
10-4312-20-430	Equipment maintenance: Includes \$7,000 to replace pins and bushings on the town loader.
10-4312-20-556	Summer maintenance: Mr. Ober agreed to the reduction in this budget from \$32,600 to \$28,000.
10-4312-20-612	Winter maintenance: Increase reflects in part an increase in the price of road salt.
10-4313-10-610	Bridge general expense: Mr. Ober did not dispute the reduction in this budget from \$600 to \$400.
01-4324-10-397	Transfer Station Recycling Testing: Last year's expense was high because two years' expenses were paid.
01-4324-10-720	Recycling Building Equipment: includes \$5,500 to buy two open top boxes.

	A warrant article may raise funds to recoup this in January. Also included in this line are funds to buy a freon extractor.
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Mr. Stewart presented the budget for the Fire Department. Notable items include:

Budget Line	Explanation
01-4215-10-390	Ambulance: Expense for this line decreased. Ashland cannot guarantee 24 hour coverage so participates in Plymouth ambulance service.
01-4220-10-430	Equipment maintenance: includes pumps and generator maintenance.
01-4220-10-614	Uniforms: 3 new firefighter recruits will require 3 uniforms @ \$1,200.
01-4220-10-740	Equipment: Needs to replace hydraulic generator for jaws of life.

Mr. Chivell presented the budget for the Police Department. Notable items include:

Budget Line	Explanation
01-4210-10-120	Part time officers' wages: increased to increase use of part time officers.
01-4210-10-125	Detail wage: Increased this line to reflect increased offering of (reimbursed) detail work to Ashland officers.
01-4210-10-450	Vehicle maintenance: This line was reduced to reflect his plans to lease a cruiser.
01-4210-10-452	Equipment Purchase: reflects budget for good condition used 4x4.
01-4210-10-453	Cruiser lease: expected cost: \$12,500
01-4210-10-635	Gasoline: expects this line item would decrease with cruiser lease.
01-4210-10-740	Equipment: includes camera with tripod for videotaping interviews.
01-4210-50-392	Police Dispatch: expense decreased.
01-4210-50-392	Prosecutor: expense increased based on Ashland's use of the prosecutor during the previous 12 months.
01-414-10-330	Animal control Expense for the NH Humane Society was increased based on the number of animals dropped off by Ashland residents.

Ms. Goss moved to adjourn. Mr. Sullivan seconded. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.